



**Leadership  
Access/Farm Succession  
Innovation  
Water**

**Friday, February 6th, 2026**

**at**

**WSU NWREC**

**16650 S.R. 536**

**Mount Vernon, WA**

# SKAGIT SUMMIT

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## Skagit Ag Summit

The Skagit Ag Summit is our region's premier gathering for farmers, agricultural professionals, community leaders, and advocates dedicated to the vitality of Skagit County agriculture. Each year, the Summit highlights the innovation, resilience, and collaboration that define our farming community while addressing the most pressing issues facing agriculture today.

Rooted in Skagit's rich agricultural heritage, the Summit brings together diverse voices to explore opportunities in farm business management, soil and water stewardship, climate adaptation, labor and workforce challenges, agricultural technology, and market development. Through keynote presentations, panel discussions, and farmer-led workshops, participants gain practical tools and insights to strengthen their operations and the future of local agriculture.

The event is also a place to celebrate the strength and diversity of Skagit agriculture—from our world-class seed industry and vibrant farm-to-table movement to emerging markets in livestock and specialty crops. Whether you are a grower, researcher, policymaker, or community partner, the Skagit Ag Summit offers a chance to learn, connect, and contribute to the sustainability and resilience of our agricultural landscape.





# Schedule

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## Agenda

### Friday morning, February 6th, 2026

- 8:30am Welcome & Opening Remarks  
Don McMoran, Director, WSU Skagit County Extension
- 8:40 am **Building Blocks for Success: Infrastructure Supporting Agriculture**  
  
Moderator: Don McMoran, Director WSU Skagit County Extension  
  
Objective: The continued viability of Skagit agriculture.  
  
Rick Larsen, Congressional District 2  
  
Ron Wesen, District 1, Skagit County Commissioner  
  
Peter Browning, District 2, Skagit County Commissioner
- 9:45 am Table Topics followed by *break*
- 10:15 am **Farm Access and Succession**  
  
Moderator: Mikala Staples-Hughes, Western Washington Agriculture Association  
  
Objective: Getting the farm to the next generation or other alternatives  
  
Michael Frazier and Francisco Farias, Viva Farm  
Elizabeth Bragg, American Farmland Trust  
Sarah Stoner, Skagit County Farmland Legacy  
Hilary Aten, Office of Farmland Preservation

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11:15 am

### New Faces in new places/hot topics

Moderator: Eric Nelson, Skagit Conservation District

Objective: Introducing new agency representatives to the Skagit Agricultural Community.

Laura Claus, Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland  
 Taylor Scott, Skagit County  
 Dr. Inci, WSU NWREC  
 Dr. Kevin Murphy, WSU Bread Lab  
 Nicole Jones, WSU Skagit County Extension

12:15 pm

Wood fired pizza by Pizza 4 Producers



1:15 pm

### Innovation

Moderator: Jake Fowler, Northwest Ag Business Center

Objective: To educate the Skagit agricultural community on agricultural business and technology

David Wallace, Farm HQ  
 Sean Hulbert, Hulbert Farms  
 Andrew Tuttle and Mary Marshall, Edge Perma  
 Nathan Kusler, 5G VTOL NW



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## Friday afternoon, February 6th

2:15 pm Table Topics followed by *break*

2:45 pm **Water**

Moderator: Don McMoran, Director, WSU Skagit County Extension

Objective: 2025 Outlook Issues impacting Skagit agriculture

Jenna Friebel, Skagit County Dike and Drainage Consortium

Kellie Gillingham, Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE)

Erin Ericson, Snoqualmie Valley Watershed Improvement District

3:45 pm Closing Remarks: Commissioner Peter Browning & WSU Skagit County Extension

4:00 pm *Evaluation and Adjourn*

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## Table Topics

### Farm Business & Succession

Farm succession clinics (legal, financial, and family communication “hot seats” using real anonymized scenarios).

Enterprise profitability labs for key Skagit rotations (dairy forage, potatoes, veg seed, berries), with partial budgets people can take home.

Capital access and “Show me the money 2.0” on grants, tax credits, and lender expectations for small and mid-sized farms.

### Land, Water, and Code

Agritourism code roundtable (planning staff + growers) to unpack proposed amendments and work through edge cases.

Farmland protection in a clean energy and mitigation world: drainage, estuary restoration, battery/solar siting, and conservation tools.

“Access, protection, acquisition” breakout on getting new operators onto land while keeping parcels in production.

### Labor, Housing, and Workforce

Year round labor strategies: H2A, local workforce development, mechanization tradeoffs, and HR basics for small farms.

Farmworker housing, transportation, and childcare as critical infrastructure for Skagit agriculture.

Capturing and transferring “institutional knowledge” from 20–30 year farmworkers and retiring operators.

### Innovation, AI, and Technology

Practical on farm tech demos: irrigation and fertigation automation, drainage monitoring, and low cost sensing.

AI and decision tools for planting windows, risk management, and regulatory paperwork reduction, grounded in real Skagit case studies.

Value added processing and direct to market logistics for Skagit crops (cold storage, co packing, and distribution partnerships).

### Community, Stress, and Next Generation

Farmer mental health and peer support: what’s actually working in the valley and how agencies can support without adding burdens.

Emerging farmer pathways (Viva and others): incubator to independent farm, including financing and land tenure models.

Youth and next generation leadership: connecting FFA/4-H and farm kids with real roles in policy, drainage, and Summit planning itself.